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Half-Century Discourse.

HISTORY

OF THE

CHURCH IN NEWINGTON:

Its Doctrine, Its Ministers, Its Experience:

PRESENTED IN THE

DISCOURSE DELIVERED ON TUESDAY THE 16TH OF JANUARY,
1855, ON HIS RELINQUISHMENT OF ACTIVE SERVICE,
AT THE CLOSE OF HALF A CENTURY FROM
HIS ORDINATION IN THAT PLACE,

BY J. BRACE, D. D.

PUBLISHED BY THE ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY.

Hartford:

PRESS OF CASE, TIFFANY AND COMPANY.

M.DCCC.LV.

*At a meeting of the Ecclesiastical Society of Newington, held
Jan. 18, 1855.*

Voted, That a copy of the half-century sermon of Rev. Dr. BRACE, delivered on the 16th inst., be solicited for publication.

Voted, That C. K. ATWOOD, R. WELLES, Jr., R. STODDARD and S. C. BRACE, be appointed Committee of Publication.

Half-Century Celebration.

ORDER OF EXERCISES

AT THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORDINATION OF REV.
J. BRACE, D. D., NEWINGTON, TUESDAY, JAN. 16, 1855.

Reading of the Scriptures and Prayer, by Rev. MARK
TUCKER, D. D.

SINGING.

Prayer by Rev. J. HAWES, D. D.

Singing—Psalm LXXI.

PSALM LXXI. THIRD PART, C. M.

GOD of my childhood, and my youth,
The guide of all my days,
I have declared thy heavenly truth,
And told thy wondrous ways.

Wilt thou forsake my hoary hairs,
And leave my fainting heart?
Who shall sustain my sinking years,
If God, my strength, depart?

Let me thy power and truth proclaim,
To the surviving age;
And leave a savor of thy name
When I shall quit the stage.

The land of silence and of death
Attends my next remove;
Oh, may these poor remains of breath
'Teach the wide world thy love!

By long experience have I known
Thy sovereign power to save;
At thy command I venture down
Securely to the grave.

When I lie buried deep in dust,
My flesh shall be thy care:
'These withering limbs with thee I trust,
To raise them strong and fair.

Half-Century Discourse, by the Pastor,
Rev. J. BRACE, D. D.

Prayer by Rev. N. PORTER, D. D.

Singing—Original Hymn by Rev. ROYAL ROBBINS,
with Doxology.

We praise thee Lord, for gifts to men,
When our Redeemer rose on high ;
Apostles, prophets, heralds, then
Proclaimed those truths that never die.

We bless Thee for the Pastor's care,
The teacher's doctrine new and old,
From treasures drawn where garnered prayer
And living faith turn all to gold.

Thy mercy, Saviour, long hath spared
Our Pastor, Teacher, Guardian, here ;
For us he toiled, with us he shared
Life's joys and woes each passing year.

'Gainst sin he warned, and sin's dread pain ;
Of heaven he spoke and heaven's delight ;
Salvation's way—he marked it plain,
That none might wander from the right.

His manhood's prime our fathers sought
To aid them in the heavenly way ;
He lives to see their children brought
In the same path to love and pray.

Now that the evil days are come,
And years have gathered round his brow,
And death hath late bereaved his home
Of her who cheered his path below ;

We would not, can not leave him lone,
But through thy grace, great God, implore
For him the solace of thy throne,
Till life, as now his charge, is o'er.

Benediction.

DISCOURSE.

FIRST CORINTHIANS II. 2; 3, 4, 5.

FOR I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU, SAVE JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED. AND I WAS WITH YOU IN WEAKNESS, AND IN FEAR, AND IN MUCH TREMBLING. AND MY SPEECH AND MY PREACHING WAS NOT WITH ENTICING WORDS OF MAN'S WISDOM, BUT IN DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT AND OF POWER: THAT YOUR FAITH SHOULD NOT STAND IN THE WISDOM OF MEN, BUT IN THE POWER OF GOD.

THE weight of the Christian ministry is enough to make any man tremble. When I came into the presence of the council, for examination and ordination, a youth as I was, I had fear even then, and awe at the great undertaking of becoming *a minister of the Lord Jesus*. But now, as I am "an old man broken with the storms of life," and wearied with toil, having actually passed fifty years among this one people, in doing this responsible work, I feel the impression of fear unspeakably more. I know that a sense of "weakness, and fear, and much trembling"—

that begging of God for his mercy, is my proper experience, on this solemn occasion, when my course is run, and my work is done.

Nevertheless, I have comfort in the conviction, and strength in my assurance that I have taken the determination of Paul, as expressed in the text, as my purpose and rule during the whole fifty years of my ministry. Truly, *I was with you in weakness*—weakness of knowledge, discretion, judgment, that should be equal to the wisdom of the ministerial office. Truly I have always *been with you in fear*—great fear lest any one soul in the whole community should be lost, through any faultiness of mine. Certainly, *I was with you in much trembling*, lest any part of the object for which the ministry is appointed, should fail of being accomplished by my services. I wanted to answer all the counsel of my father, in his ordination sermon; that is, to fulfill all that is included in being *a good minister of Jesus Christ*. I have been anxious to do all that belonged “to the work of the ministry, to the perfecting of the saints, to the edifying of the body of Christ. And who is sufficient for these things?”

In this resolution of Paul, as to his preaching, we have the sum of the redeeming gospel, the

self-originated, eternal grace of the infinite mind, the incarnation of the Son of God, the atoning blood of the Lamb, the justifying righteousness of the great Redeemer. The doctrines which I have taught this people are, that "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son to die for our sins;" that the man who had been "dead in sin is made alive in Jesus Christ;" that "the carnal mind, which had been enmity against God, is cleansed, washed, sanctified, justified, glorified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." And I have showed "what manner of persons you will be," as you receive the proper effect of this gospel upon your heart and life, *viz.*, that you will break the power of sin, that you will abhor the love of sin, that you will resist the indulgence of sin, that you shall be delivered from the punishment of sin, that "you shall be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness," thus "growing up, day by day, to a meetness for the kingdom of Christ in heaven." I have made it my single purpose to drive at this one point of Paul, the atonement of Christ, which will secure the salvation of every soul that rests by a living faith upon that atonement. I understand Paul to declare in the text, that he never preached

one doctrine, never held one sentiment, but what had its root in this one ground, "Jesus Christ and him crucified." Indeed no minister, who receives the atonement of Christ in this manner, can there be, but does actually preach, and must of necessity preach, all the great doctrines contained in the gospel. This is something above "the enticing words of man's wisdom. It is the wisdom of God in a mystery. It is the power of God." Here is "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power," by which "a man is born again," and by which a stranger is turned into a child of God. This is the summary of my preaching, during my half-century. I hope it will be thought sufficient for the present occasion, which is rather designed to give a history of the gospel's influence, than to set forth a theory of doctrine.

I will now pass on to describe the formation of character among this people, as it has been made by "the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified. This is an original Puritan church, the same from the beginning. The covenant has never been changed, and I pray that it never may be changed to the end of the world. What reverence for creeds, or confidence can there be in them, if every minister that is settled must

make a new confession of faith? This covenant, written in this pulpit Bible and in the church records, was brought from the mother church, and here it is to this day. All the ministers here have received the same doctrine, and have manifested the same spirit as Paul in the text, "nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

I suppose that settlers began to come over upon this side of the cedar mountain, several years previous to 1700; and for many years they went home to Wethersfield for public worship, and for the burial of the dead.* The first that was laid in this church-yard was Lydia Buck, aged twenty-eight, in the year 1726. The first male, was Simon Willard, aged sixty-six, Jan. 8, 1726.

The act of incorporation was passed, 1713; and it was ordered by the general assembly, that the people of Newington be exempted from all obligation to maintain the minister of Wethersfield, so long as they should support the worship of God among themselves. This grant I find in the records of the colony—in the reign of queen Anne of England, Gurdon Saltonstall being then governor of Connecticut, and Robert Wells representative from this town.

* See Appendix, No. 2.

Among the earliest planters I may mention the names of Andrus, Buck, Boardman, Camp, Deming, Hunn, Kilbourn, Patterson, Sledd, Willard, and Whittlesey. Although the charter was granted 1713, I find no record of a meeting until April 5, 1716, when a society meeting was held at the dwelling-house of James Francis, at which meeting Josiah Willard was chosen clerk, and he was continued in that office for many years. At this meeting it was voted and acted to raise their meeting-house within that instant month of April, 1716, on a spot of ground which is a few rods to the south-east of this house. John Stoddard, Samuel Hunn and Stephen Buck had the charge of the building, to act according to the best of their discretion for the public interest. At a society meeting held Jan. 15, 1719, John Stoddard and Abraham Warren were appointed a committee to treat with Mr. Nathaniel Burnham to come and preach with them. The ministers that have preached here have been Nathaniel Burnham, Elisha Williams, Mr. Russel, Jr., of Middletown, Simon Backus, Joshua Belden, Elisha Yale, Aaron Cleveland. Four of these were only occasional supply. Of the three settled pastors I wish to give some distinct account.

The first ordained pastor of this church was Mr. Williams. At a society meeting held April 6, 1720, it was voted that Jabez Whittlesey and Abraham Warren be a committee to treat with Mr. Elisha Williams, to come and be our minister in Newington. Their resolution to invite him is so worded as to give me peculiar pleasure, because it shows how careful the people were, to obtain a man of the true doctrine, and of the right spirit. "Sept. 12, 1722, it was voted and agreed, that having had some considerable experience of his life and doctrine—we do make choice, by a full vote, of the Rev. Mr. Elisha Williams to be our minister and pastor." "Also voted to keep Wednesday, the third of October next ensuing, as a fast, to implore the divine assistance of God, in gathering a church of Christ here, and in the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Elisha Williams."

On that day of fasting and prayer, Oct. 3, 1722, the church was organized by Rev. Stephen Mix, of Wethersfield, and Rev. Samuel Whitman, of Farmington, a most pleasing and gratifying beginning of all that has been done, and is to be done here, in the work of salvation, through "Jesus Christ and him crucified." The ordination of Mr. Williams was solemnized on the 17th

day of October, 1722. Elisha Williams was born at Hatfield, Mass., son of the minister, Rev. William Williams—was graduated at Harvard College, 1711. He was the preacher in Newington from 1720 to 1726, until he was made president of Yale College. The college was flourishing and happy under his administration, which continued during thirteen years. Failing health obliged him to resign that office. He was a man to be praised for his science, urbanity, and cultivation of mind. The people of this place valued him very highly—were ready to do everything for him—and yielded him up with great reluctance. He was empowered with a military command intended for Cape Breton, in Canada, after which he was sent, as agent for the colony of Connecticut, to England, and was introduced to the acquaintance of the celebrated Dr. Doddridge. He was well furnished with academical literature, was a thorough Calvinist, and is characterized as one of the best of men. Dr. Doddridge was so delighted with his conversation and Christian character, that he called Mr. Williams, “The praying colonel.” While Mr. Williams was in England, his wife died here at home, and he married, through the influence of Dr. Doddridge, an English woman, whom Mr.

Belden used to describe to me as a woman of great spirit and eminent piety, a member of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, through whose agency Mr. Belden, and other ministers in this neighborhood, were furnished with good books for distribution, as by a tract society from England, even in those colonial days.

After his resignation, he retired to his seat at Wethersfield. He soon became a member of the assembly, and speaker of the house of representatives. He was further promoted to be one of the judges of the superior court, and after a pious, useful, and honorable life, he died in Wethersfield, July 24, 1755, just one hundred years ago, aged short of seventy, in the eighth year of Mr. Belden's ministry. I gather up Mr. Williams's whole praise in one sentence written by Dr. Doddridge, *viz.*: "I look upon Col. Williams to be one of the best men upon earth: he has, joined to an ardent sense of religion, solid learning, consummate prudence, great candor, sweetness of temper, and a certain nobleness of soul, capable of contriving and acting the greatest things, without seeming to be conscious of his having done them." O my brethren! I do esteem it a great honor and happiness given us

from God, to be permitted to look back upon such a wise and good man, as having been the first minister of this church!

The second pastor of this church was Mr. Backus. He was introduced into the place several months before Mr. Williams finally removed. At several society meetings held in May and June, 1726, it was "voted and agreed, that Dea. Jabez Whittlesey, Dea. John Deming and John Stoddard, do, in behalf of the society, proceed to make application to Rev. Mr. Simon Backus, of Norwich, to come and be our minister." From all the testimony which I have found, I am convinced that Mr. Backus was a substantial, orthodox, pious minister, that gave good satisfaction to the people during his ministry, which continued about twenty years. He says, in his communication answering their call, "In a due sense of my unworthiness to be employed in, and insufficiency for, that great and solemn work of the ministry, I desire your earnest prayers with mine, 'to the God of all grace, that I may come to you in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.'" Mr. Backus was ordained pastor and minister, Jan. 25, 1727. His wife was one of the ten daughters, (every one of which has been said to be six feet tall,

making the sixty feet daughters, and all of them strong in mind,) children of Rev. Timothy Edwards, of East Windsor. Mr. Belden used to tell me of Madam Backus, as living here in his time, and of her brother Rev. Jonathan Edwards, of Northampton, as visiting his sister, and favoring Mr. Belden by preaching to the congregation of Newington. This is worthy to be noted as a high privilege for us. I suppose she closed her life at Bridgeport, with her son, Rev. Simon Backus, who was the minister of that place. Mr. Backus himself died in 1745, at Cape Breton, whither he had gone as chaplain in the colonial service, aged about forty-five years. He was a good minister, and lived in great harmony with his people.

The third pastor and minister of this people was Mr. Belden, one of the most solemn and conscientious of all. June 15, 1747, in society meeting, "Capt. Martin Kellogg, moderator, it was voted and agreed, that Dea. John Deming, Capt. Josiah Willard, Pelatiah Buck, be a committee to treat with Mr. Joshua Belden, of Wethersfield, about his settlement, and give him a call to be our minister." Mr. Belden answers, just as I should expect, with his own reverent expression. "Forasmuch as the infinitely wise

God has been pleased to commit the invaluable treasure of preaching the gospel, to earthen vessels, which is a work worthy of heavenly messengers, 'that the excellence of the power might appear to be of God, and not of men,' I engage in this important and difficult work, relying on the promise and presence of God for assistance, hoping for the blessing of God upon you and me in all our ways, and that we may be built up in peace and love through faith unto salvation." The people, in their ever vigilant care for a true and sound ministry, "agree and promise to support and honor Mr. Belden so long as he preaches the Calvinistical doctrine, as it is generally preached at this day." Mr. Belden explicitly submits himself to the judgment and decision of the association, whenever occasion should call, for the testing of his orthodoxy. Mr. Belden was ordained the minister of Newington, Nov. 11, 1747, and was continued in the pastoral office during sixty-six years. A special day of fasting and prayer was observed by the church, congregation, and candidate, a few days before the ordination of each minister.

In the consecration of Mr. Belden, "Rev. Edward Eells, of Middletown, North Society, (Cromwell,) introduced the public service. Rev.

Daniel Russel, of Stepney, (Rocky Hill,) made the prayer before sermon. Rev. Ashbel Woodbridge, of Glastenbury, preached the sermon. Rev. William Russell, of Middletown, First Society, made the first prayer at imposition of hands, and gave the charge. Rev. Benjamin Colton, of West Hartford, made the last prayer at imposition of hands: those that imposed hands were Rev. Messrs. William Russel, Benjamin Colton, Ashbel Woodbridge, and Daniel Russel. Rev. James Lockwood, of Wethersfield, gave the right hand of fellowship. Mr. Belden did the actual service of the ministry during fifty-six years, lived about ten years beyond his own preaching, and closed his life July 23, 1813, at the age of eighty-nine. A full account of him is given in the Conn. Evang. Magazine for that year. It is sufficient for me to say here, that he was a minister of Christ, sound in the faith, dignified and circumspect in his conversation, a conscientious, holy, praying man. He had a great family, eleven children, and great experience of sickness and death in his house. He buried two wives and six children. He was a humble man, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer." When his wife, (Anne Belden, of Wethersfield,) the

mother of ten of his children, expired, young, he quoted at the moment of her departure, these words, "I am dumb, I open not my mouth, because thou didst it." After a long course of years, standing by the open grave of his wife, (Honor Whiting, of Norwich,) being asked by the sexton whether Mr. Belden wished to look upon her face more, he replied, with his characteristic majesty, "I hope to see her 'in the resurrection of the just.'" A child that stood among the company at that scene, and who is an old man here to-day, tells me that the impression of that look and word fastened itself upon his soul to this hour, and led the youth to think of preparation for eternity.

I was settled as colleague with Mr. Belden, and I enjoyed the relation entirely. My views of "Jesus Christ and him crucified," and my sentiments and feelings in the whole gospel, were just the same as his own. He was a great lover of evangelical preaching, kind, fatherly, easy to be pleased, as it was always a delightful purpose with me to please and honor him. He was converted in Yale College, at the time when Rev. George Whitefield, and the two Tennents preached in New Haven. He was of the same class with the celebrated missionary, David

Brainerd. He admired Whitefield, and within a few years after his settlement here, Mr. Belden had the gratification of receiving Mr. Whitefield here into his own house, and of going in company with him to Farmington, to hear him preach to the great congregation. I never heard Mr. Belden preach; but I received from the people here the very best impression of his life and ministration. He was then fourscore, and he felt himself unable to speak in public, which led him to say to me, "You must not expect any service of me. You must feel that every part of the work is laid upon you." I did not take this charge as expressing any want of cordiality toward me; but only as proof of his own infirmity, and as a testimony of his wonderful confidence in his youthful colleague. I can truly say here before you all, that Rev. Joshua Belden was a minister of Christ, and a fatherly man, whom I loved and revered. At his special desire I preached at his funeral, taking for my text, "Your fathers, where are they?—and the prophets, do they live forever?"

There are so many good things to be said of these excellent men, that they might well fill up the time without my calling your attention to the works of this last half-century in which I

have been laboring here, and at this point I might dismiss you. This society too has been wonderful, from the beginning, for its order and peace, now about one hundred and fifty years. Never has there been a quarrel with any minister; never a council called to settle any difficulty in this church!

As for me and my course among you, I have to say, that my coming to this place was remarkably providential. And when I look back and “remember all the way by which the Lord has led me these fifty years,” I am filled with humility and admiration! I had never been introduced to one of the congregation. I did not even see the men that called for me. The committee that made their application were Dea. James Wells, Dea. Daniel Willard and Gen. Levi Lusk. I received my license Sept. 24, 1804, at the hand of Dr. Nathan Strong, moderator of the north consociation of Hartford county, at Enfield. My horse, saddle and bridle were provided, to carry me over the land as a candidate for the ministry, and I was looking far abroad, for years of preparatory service. My first Sabbath was spent in Ellington, out of kindness to Rev. Diodate Brockway, who had been

broken by a terrible fall.* Before my arrival at my home in West Hartford, the committee had visited Dr. Perkins, my minister and teacher, desiring him to send to Newington the man, whom they might settle as their minister, on his judgment, and so escape the divisions which are frequently caused by hearing several men. He gave his promise to the committee that I should be with you on the following Sabbath, although he could not insure the condition of their request. Saturday afternoon I came over what seemed the long and solitary road, an inexperienced youth, an utter stranger, with anxious feelings, as you may well suppose, in regard to such an errand as that of *preaching the kingdom of God*. I was received into the house of Mr. James Wells, and was by him conducted, on the Sabbath morning of October 7, 1804, to the door of this temple in which I am to this day. I spake not to one man, for I knew not any—not even to Mr. Belden, until I met him in the pulpit; but I opened my message with the beatitude of Jesus: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Through the agency of my old friend and classmate, now Dr. McEwen, of New London, I

* See Appendix, No. 6.

was bound to Mr. Solomon Rockwell, of Winsted, after four Sabbaths should be passed, to preach in that place ; but at the instance of the people here, I was released from my promise, and here I am before you to-day, after preaching here more than fifty years. I am filled with wonder and gratitude in thinking how “God bringeth the blind by a way that he knew not.” Fifteen weeks I spent in the most pleasant intercourse among the people, to the time of ordination. I had not a single Sabbath’s vacation, either to consider the call, or to prepare my first pastoral sermon, and I have never had a vacation to this day, but have preached without intermission.

The ninth day of January, 1805, was observed as a day of fasting and prayer, with a view to the apostolic example, in preparing the candidate and the people for the ordination. “The Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” Rev. Joseph Washburn, of Farmington, a meek and lovely minister, (who soon after died, in youth,) was invited to preach at that fast, which he did solemnly and affectionately, on this text, “Brethren, pray for us.”

On the sixteenth day of January, 1805, just fifty years ago this day and this hour, I was consecrated as the pastor of this church, and minister of this people. What an era in my life, and in my condition for eternity ! The council was large and able, and, in my eyes, they were venerable men ; but they are gone from earth. How am I impressed with the thought, that those hands which were then laid upon my head are dissolved into dust ! that every member of the council is gone to the grave ; Rev. Messrs. Joshua Belden, John Smalley, Nathan Strong, John Marsh, Nathan Perkins, Benoni Upson, Evan Johns, Abel Flint, Calvin Chapin, Aaron Cleveland, Joseph Washburn. Every delegate from the churches too is gone to his grave ; Gad Stanley, Esq., of New Britain, Dea. Samuel Williams, of Wethersfield, Dea. John Treadwell, (Governor of Connecticut,) of Farmington, Dea. Joseph Steward, of Hartford, Dea. Joshua Hempsted, of Hartford, Dea. Selah Hart, of Kensington, Dea. Jedidiah Sage, of Worthington, (Berlin,) Dea. Jedidiah Mills, of West Hartford, Jabez Riley, Esq., of Rocky Hill. Since that day of ordination, eight hundred millions have died from this earth, and a greater number have entered into the world ! How the flood rolls into eternity !

“The tall, the wise, the reverend head,
Must lie as low as ours.”

The ordination, then a new thing, almost every church in the neighborhood having an aged minister, drew a large number of ministers, perhaps fifty, and gathered a multitude of people, far beyond what could be received into the house. It was an extraordinary occasion. I should like to give a distinct view of the exercises. Rev. Abel Flint, of Hartford, scribe, introduced the solemnity by reading the minutes of the council. Rev. Evan Johns, an Englishman, minister of Worthington, made the first prayer. Rev. Nathan Perkins, D. D., of West Hartford, preached the sermon on the text in Colossians i. 7: “As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.” Rev. John Marsh, D. D., of Wethersfield, made the ordaining prayer, with laying on hands by Rev. Messrs. Belden, Smalley, Marsh and Perkins. Rev. John Smalley, D. D., of New Britain, moderator of the council, gave the charge.* Rev. Calvin Chapin, of Rocky Hill, gave the right hand of fellowship. Rev. Benoni Upson, of Kensington, offered the concluding

* See Appendix, No. 1.

prayer. "This is that day of the Lord to be much observed by me," in all the way of my life, and "in my generations." How wonderful is that divine hand, which after fifty years of service, gives me strength to stand up and speak before you here this day! I do acknowledge it with admiring thanks to the God of mercy. I give glory to his name for every soul that has received grace, and I have "much fear and trembling" at thought of any who may have come short of salvation. I would fain indulge the hope "that I am pure from the blood of all men."

It becomes me to say, that "having obtained help of God I continue to this day, witnessing both to small and great, knowing nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And when I reflect, that I was only twenty-three, when I received the charge of the congregation, a youth surrounded by those aged and intelligent faces, I wonder how I could stand up with confidence, and how I should be so favorably received. Let me look round for a moment upon that assembly. How I can see them, "in my mind's eye!" Shall I call up some of my old friends by name? David Lowrey, Lemuel Wittlesey, Robert Wells, Francis Deming, Joseph Camp, Enos Hunn, Martin Kellogg, Justus Fran-

cis, Abel Andrus, Elizur Andrus, Dea. James Wells, Asher Atwood, Robert Francis, the only one still living, (in his ninety-second year,) Elias Seymour, Elias Deming, Elijah Wells, Dea. Daniel Willard, Unni Robbins, Luther Latimer, Jonathan Stoddard, Benjamin Stoddard, Josiah Willard, Levi Hurlburt, Amos A. Webster, Levi Lusk, John Kirkham, Simon Kilbourn, and many others somewhat younger, that I would gladly mention, but time would fail. The mention of their name revives their image. But the people quickly gave me their confidence. The blessing of God be upon their remembrances in our minds. I was readily received by them, as they had confidence in my aged teacher and patron. In this I was something like my brother Hawes. The people of Hartford, divided into several parties, yet bound to the general good, said to Dr. Woods, of Andover, "Send us the man whom you judge to be right for this city, and upon your word we will have him." There he has stood nearly forty years, and I thank him for coming to pray with me and strengthen me this day.

I have never been sick. I acknowledge the hand which has "held my soul in life." I was once lame, and detained two or three Sabbaths;

but I have not put my people to the cost of a single Sabbath's preaching, since I began on the seventh day of October, 1805. "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Let me do the highest honor to the work of the Holy Spirit, that divine comforter, which has "never left us, never forsaken us." Members of the church at the time of my taking the oversight of it, *viz.*, Eunice Wolcott, James and Abigail Wells, Martha Wells, Elijah Wells, Hannah Kellogg, Robert and Abigail Wells, Daniel Willard, Levi and Martha Hurlburt, Mercy Churchill, Elizabeth Romans, Jemima Kellogg, Justus and Lois Francis, Tabitha Andrus, Mabel Webster, Dorothy Stoddard, Octavia Belden, Abel and Rhoda Andrus, Sarah Rockwell, Elizabeth Seymour, Jerusha Seymour, (the only remaining member, aged eighty-five,) Mary Atwood, Anne Deming, Abigail Griswold, Alma Wells, Honor Blinn, Lucy Wells, Hannah Andrus, Clara Wells, Mary Kellogg, Anna Camp, Levi Deming, Ashbel Seymour, Mary Lowrey, Jemima Kellogg, Joshua and Dorothy Belden, Francis Coslet, Ole-dine Andrus, Eunice Seymour, David and Lucy Lowrey, Roger Hurlburt, Lydia Andrus, Esther Latimer, Anna Andrus, Lois Andrus. Fifty-one.

In 1805, some minds were touched with a

sense of sin, and made sensible of the Saviour's love, eleven of whom were admitted to the church. In 1812, a class of the young came to me every week "to ask after Christ and him crucified," of whom ten or twelve made a public profession. In 1815 a number appeared to "be born again." In 1816 another company "gave themselves to the Lord." In 1819 and 1820 young people gathered around me for religious instruction and prayer, eight of whom came into the church. Thus during the first sixteen years of my ministry I enjoyed a continued, silent, encouraging, religious attention in the minds of my people. The year 1821 is a memorable year, not only here, but in all New England, and indeed extensively through the United States. I suppose that was the greatest revival that has ever been enjoyed since the settlement of the country. Rev. Asahel Nettleton, one of the most useful preachers of that day, through whose ministrations, as I believe, thousands and thousands in the land, were brought to a saving "knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified," was much with me, and he gave occasion to our people to have him in remembrance through everlasting ages. He was a choice brother to me, and his spirit has been felt in every one of

my sermons, from that day to this. The whole people were overwhelmed with thoughts of the soul and eternity, "and many were added to the Lord." From that time religious attention has been periodical, as though not greatly demanded in ordinary times. This I have lamented. In 1826 the youth in my school had a precious season of prayer and inquiry, and some of them became teachers and ministers. In 1829 the young were awakened, and fourteen were united with the church. In 1831 and 1832 there was a great attention, and twenty-nine were received to communion. In 1837 and 1838, just after the renewing of this house, there was an extraordinary impression upon our people. The lingering were roused and hastened. Twelve aged people joined the church together, many of whom are gone to their judge. Thirty-three younger were brought in at another communion. In 1842 and 1843 there was a remarkable awakening which led thirty-four to a public profession of the Saviour's name. In 1844 the people were again moved, and nine came to the family of Christ. Since the last date twenty-four have been received, by letter and profession. How pleasant and how cheering it has been to me to see the people coming up, and how delightful to help

them in their coming up to mount Zion! “O that all the Lord’s people had become holy.”

Our population has always been small, consisting of six or seven hundred, and therefore my account will not seem very wonderful to you who are surrounded by your thousands of people; but I consider that one redeemed soul is an eternal treasure. I have received into the church, in all, three hundred and twenty-one; baptized, in all, four hundred and one; dismissed and recommended to other churches over one hundred; married two hundred and fifty-seven couples; and buried four hundred and fifty-three bodies. I suppose there is but one here now that voted on the question of my becoming the minister. And here he is at my side to-day, having come with me from the first day all the way through, a man of equal age, an old, confiding friend, always satisfied with my work, and now in his grey hairs, standing on the margin and looking over into the land that lies beyond. God grant that we may stand together before the face of Jesus Christ with exceeding joy. There is not one couple remaining, within these whole precincts, (and hardly in the world,) not one unbroken, that was in the marriage covenant fifty years ago.

God has caused me to stand upon this one spot so long, that I am now preaching "Christ and him crucified" to the fifth generation, and what I especially admire is, that he has made me to be favorably received by all these generations. I have stood here while my brethren all around me have been changed. I have been in association and service with five different pastors of the church in Wethersfield, in Worthington seven, in New Britain nine, in West Hartford six, in the city of Hartford from thirteen to twenty! This long union with my people in the ministry of the word, and blessings of salvation, has made them to me as my own life and soul. You can not tell with how much pleasure I have looked upon them. The greatest exhilaration that I ever had in my life, I have enjoyed while standing here as I now do, preaching "Christ and him crucified," to this people.

The church may be called a peaceable church. It implicitly confides everything to the minister, and supposes that he will always do right. The office-bearers of the church, so far as I have had any intercourse with them, may well receive my word of acknowledgment and blessing, for their entire friendship and kindness to me. I should like to give their names from the beginning.

Dea. Jabez Whittlesey is recorded as early as the church itself; but about the year 1745, he removed to Bethlem. Dea. John Deming died May 1, 1761. Dea. Josiah Willard is mentioned among the earliest and most active helpers in the church and society, and may have been in office as early as 1725. Dea. Joshua Andrus was chosen 1757. Dea. John Camp was appointed 1761. Dea. Elisha Stoddard was chosen August 13, 1782. Dea. Charles Churchill was chosen Aug. 31, 1786. Dea. James Wells was appointed Aug. 5, 1790, died March 25, 1825. Dea. Daniel Willard was chosen Feb. 24, 1803, died Jan. 16, 1817. Dea. Levi Deming was appointed Oct. 29, 1818, died Jan. 1, 1847. Dea. Origen Wells was chosen Oct. 29, 1818, still living. Dea. Jedediah Deming, was appointed July 1, 1847, still living. Dea. Jeremiah Seymour, was chosen Nov. 29, 1849, still living. It gives me great pleasure to say, that I never have found the least disposition in these brethren to interfere with the pastor's authority, or work, or influence; but, on the contrary, always ready to support and aid him. The six last named have all served the church with me.

The Sabbath School and Bible Classes are worthy of a special consideration. It is nearly

forty years since the opening of the Sabbath school, which has been conducted with the greatest patience, constancy, and fidelity. I feel myself called upon to say, that the superintendents and teachers have rendered a great service to this people, and to the world, in giving so much Christian instruction to the young, and I do trust they will meet the approbation of Christ, their judge. Often has the divine influence been felt in the Sabbath School. Our most active Christian people have been raised in the Sabbath School. If we are to have Christians, Ministers, and Missionaries, we must look for their beginning, to the pious family and to the Sabbath School. Therefore let me urge you to cherish the Sabbath School more and more. Our superintendents have been, Brother Daniel Willard, Deacon Origen Wells, Brother William Deming, Deacon Jedidiah Deming, and Brother Levi S. Deming ; and to them I give my word of hearty commendation.*

I have taught a distinct Bible class, for more than thirty years, not so much that I expected to teach them better, but I wanted to maintain my acquaintance with the young, and I have

* See Appendix, No. 3.

enjoyed the pleasure of receiving the greater part of them into the church. I found a Thursday evening meeting, the first week that I came here, a prayer meeting statedly held by the praying brethren, and I have maintained it to this time, besides many other extra services, and in seasons of special attention, I have sometimes preached nine addresses in a week. I have enjoyed in the course of the half-century, the assistance of many praying brethren, who have kindly helped me in the prayer meetings, which I do acknowledge with great pleasure. The monthly concert of prayer for missions has been attended here ever since the monthly concert began, and it has been a fountain of blessings to this people as well as to the heathen.

I have a few lines for the choir of singers, both the performers and the leaders in sacred music, of whom I do speak with complacency, from the days of Arthur Andrus, Ashbel Seymour, Joseph Camp, and others, to the services of Henry L. Kellogg, which we have enjoyed so long, and I do acknowledge, as far as I am capable, how much we owe to them, and to their companions, in this delightful part of public worship. Our singing has generally been good, often excellent, such as might really assist us in loving,

enjoying, praising our God and Redeemer. I feel that the prosperity of the congregation depends almost as much upon good singing as it does upon a good ministry, and I know that we are quite liable to undervalue the diligence and constancy of those who keep alive good sacred music. According to my feeling, the pleasure enjoyed in the singing, to say nothing of the preaching, is a rich reward for all the labor of attending on the house of God, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

Collections for promoting the “knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified,” over the world, have long been made by my people both gratifying to me and profitable to themselves. I believe they have generally been more willing to have me as pastor, make the regular calls, than to give their contributions occasionally at the solicitation of agents, and in justice, I am bound to say, that they have never turned me a deaf ear. They have done it by system and organization. I began with my first year, and for a number following, I made only one collection annually, to aid the Connecticut Missionary Society in preaching the gospel to the new settlements, that is to say, New Connecticut and Vermont, and I felt rich, when my sermon on the first Sabbath in

May, under permission of the Governor's proclamation, produced twenty dollars for our destitute brethren. Then as the calls for missions advanced, my people enlarged and extended their benefactions, by the action of the young men's home mission, gentlemen's association, ladies' association, young ladies' association, monthly concert, Sabbath school, and infant class, all yearly contributors to the missionary work, until the amount has come well toward an equality with what my salary has been. They have made collections for home missions, foreign missions, Bible societies, tract societies, education of ministers, Greeks, sufferers by fires, building churches, asylums, retreats for the mute and insane, evangelists, and every other means of enlightening and blessing mankind. Many times in the year have they opened their hand, and they have found the "blessings of the liberal man."

Temperance must not be passed over in this review. At my first coming among my people, they generally drank ardent spirits, although they were not intemperate, according to the standard of that day. The first cost of the liquor was greater, I judge, than the minister's salary; but that was not equal to one-half of

the sacrifice. The materials for making strong drink were abundant. The trade was profitable and honorable. Some of our most excellent men had their distilleries in operation, and they thought no evil. And there were others of equally good character who thought it no harm to retail. Such was the patronage of intemperance. But no sooner was the mischief understood, than those very men quenched their fires, and abandoned their trade, at whatever sacrifice. The temperance work was undertaken here with decision and determination. As far back as 1816, the reform from indulgence of the appetite became strong. Dr. Chapin, of Rocky Hill, was the first man to move for the exclusion of liquors from the association of ministers, and he was soon sustained by every member. The example of ministers was followed by the people, and now, for a long course of years, there has been in this place no distillery, no tavern, store, shop, or other place of selling liquor. I have been a witness of a wonderful change, and I must testify to the remarkable temperance and sobriety of this people.

The pecuniary means of our people are, as I judge, augmented by ten fold within the last half-century. Let me give most hearty thanks to the

Author of Bounty, who has not suffered them to grow poor, notwithstanding all their ecclesiastical sacrifices and missionary contributions. It fills me with peculiar pleasure to be enabled to give this public testimony to the honor of God, upon "the cheerful giver." I might invite you to look into their neat and happy homes. Scarcely a floor was carpeted when I came here ; and now they all have carpets. Elegant furniture, center-tables, beautiful books, abound in their dwellings. New houses have taken place of the old, and excellent dwellings have been built on new situations. Migration to the west, which had for years been equal to the population left behind, has been checked, and has given way to the multiplying of young families at home. I can not but admire the conveniences for riding. Instead of two or three curricles which were found in the whole parish, lines of polished carriages now come to the public worship from every quarter. When I first came to this place we rode together on horseback upon our saddle and pillion, the minister and his wife among them, and we thought the conveyance good ! For a long time we had no post-office, and were obliged to go four or six miles, to Wethersfield, or Hartford, for our letters, whereas now we are cheered by

awaiting the constant mail. The employment of our people is chiefly agricultural; but one mill and two factories are in continual operation. The music of the spinning-wheel, once so universal in our habitations, has given place to the sound of the piano and melodeon, which are skillfully used; while the hand cards, wheel, and reel, (if our daughters should see them,) would scarce be known what things they were. Fine linen I wore, not brought from Egypt or Tyre, but made from native flax, by kind hands now in this house, and I received the donations to my family very much in home-spun yarn. Rough and unwrought highways have become smooth as the railroad.

For many years this house was unwarmed except by the living fire of human bodies; and some came from the remotest parts of the parish, in the severity of cold, and never saw fire until they returned to their homes! This house, which was seven years old when I received ordination in it, was renewed in 1838, and within the last year has been made, as you now see it, a beautiful and honorable sanctuary, as pleasant a place for public speaking as I ever used. This burying-ground, which lay open to the highway and was trodden by all manner of feet, has been

changed into this comely cemetery, “where they softly lie and sweetly sleep,” and where we pleasantly look for the angel of the resurrection.

Schools were remarkably good here, fifty years ago, sixty years ago, in the hands of your Willards, and Wellses, and Seymours, and Stoddards, and Kirkhams, and many teachers were furnished for other places. I can not say that the school-houses have received much advancement in the course of the half-century; but education has been carried on.

The money has been expended upon the mind, and not upon the buildings. During the last twenty years there have been employed, as I judge, and as a well experienced brother here, judged with me, more than one thousand dollars annually in purchasing education abroad, in addition to the benefit derived from our own academy school, which has enjoyed the teachings of Foster, Cooley, Emerson, Hoyt, Gillett, Marvin, Wales, Kilbourn, Horton, Fisher, Sessions, Ripley, Linsley, Atwood, and Welles, during a period of more than twenty years. From twenty to thirty men of more public education have been raised here, in addition, a number of whom have been, or are now, minis-

ters of the gospel. For thirty years I had a school in my own house, of perhaps two hundred in the whole, out of which some came to be teachers, lawyers, physicians, ministers, members of congress, and officers in missionary institutions. I do hope they never learned anything of me but what might lead them to “Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Reading has always been a great entertainment among this people, and it is so now as much as ever, and perhaps more. But the reading of this day encompasses a wider circle than the reading of the ancients. The first class that I met here were men of intelligence, men of sound mind and good cultivation, men of real theological and scriptural knowledge. There are three public libraries, not very large but good, Newington library, charity library, social library, full of the standard works in divinity, history, philosophy, poetry, travels, enough to give any attentive student, a good education. These books now lie at rest, while the current publications fill the minds of the younger generations. We had but two papers, the Connecticut Courant, and the American Mercury, and but one magazine, the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine; and now we have both magazines and papers

without number. Thousands of Sabbath school books have been read here. I have observed all the way that books have imparted to their minds an intellectual pleasure, which has raised them above all trifling meetings and vain recreations, and the gospel has given them sobriety, conscience, and respect for eternal retribution.

For twenty years we had no public signal for the hour of meeting, which privation subjected me to many anxious watchings, and many mortifications, whenever I was behind my people in punctuality. But on the evening of a "Thanksgiving Day," my friend Roger Welles said, "I will try for a bell," and in a few days he gathered money sufficient; and from that time we have enjoyed the pleasure of the "church-going bell."

Fifty years ago there was no road from this place to Hartford, and the little intercourse with the city was carried on, either by going over the mountain to Wethersfield, or by passing round through West Hartford; whereas now this road by Josiah Atwood's is one of the most traveled ways in the region, a real thoroughfare, which identifies almost all the business of this place with the commerce of Hartford. The present generation can hardly conceive what an im-

provement there is in this one accommodation, compared with the inconvenience which their fathers suffered.

As to my family, I often think of the patriarch's admiration, when "the angels of God met him at Mahanaim." "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou has showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." I look round upon twenty-eight souls which God has given to me, those that have been, and those that are now the subject of my joys, my anxieties, my prayers, and my hopes. My children were all received into the church of Christ, and more than half of my grandchildren have already joined themselves to the Lord in a public profession. Four of my sons were graduates of Yale College, one of Williams College. Two are in the Christian Ministry, Rev. Samuel N. Shepard, pastor of the church in Madison, Conn., and Rev. John Todd, D. D., pastor of a church in Pittsfield, Mass. One died pastor of a church in Lanesboro', Mass. One died at home just as he had arrived at age. Two sons are engaged in their professions. Four of my grandsons died in childhood. And now the mother of my family has just been

taken from me. I may say that my domestic happiness has been as full as it could be in a sinful, dying state, children dutiful, grandchildren kind, ministers all of one sentiment and feeling in the Puritan faith. I have great confidence in the covenant of God with his people, and I look for his covenant blessing upon the latest soul. "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee."

I wish to say a few words on the intercourse which I have enjoyed with my people during these fifty years. I have wished to visit them in their houses as much as I could, in order to cultivate the most friendly familiarity, to rejoice in their domestic welfare, to sympathize in their sorrows, always endeavoring to direct my conversation so as to advance the great object of the ministry, *viz.*, the everlasting blessedness of their souls. I have always desired to gain the favor of their children, and let them feel that the children had a place in the special regard of the minister. I am bound to say that I have ever been received into their houses with the most unaffected kindness, and have been blessed in the respect of both parents and children. I have intended to see every family at their homes at least once a year; and when any of them

have been sick, I have visited them very often. I suppose I have made more than a thousand visits to the schools, in cultivating my acquaintance with the young, and in encouraging their education. Certainly I have enjoyed the friendship of the young people in a remarkable degree. When, three years ago, I offered to the congregation to stop my preaching, as in the course of that year I was coming to the grand climacteric of threescore and ten, supposing that some of my people might wish for the change, and especially that the young might feel a desire for a young minister, I was cheered on to the filling up of my half-century by the interposition of the young themselves. A number of young men who had grown up insensibly to the proper age without putting in their names, came forward together and joined themselves to the ecclesiastical society, for the purpose of holding up their hands and saying, "We are not to be understood as desiring our minister to cease from his labors." That was one of the most gratifying testimonies that I have ever received, and I have not lost the strength of it to this day. And when my young brethren, of the special committee of the society, came to my house a few days ago, on the question of my fifty-year resignation,

after an hour of kind conversation, they told me, as their opinion and feeling, that I should be justified in making the declaration here to-day, "That I have not an enemy in the place!" *

-I come now, my people, to the most solemn part of this history: I am to speak of sickness, death, and mourning, a part in which every soul in this place has a deep concern. What family is there among all this people, in which I have not witnessed sickness, pain, and sorrow, fear, agitation, and agony? What house is there among these hills and valleys, upon which the midnight angel hath not come down with his dread commission? What ties of nature, kindred, and affection have not been sundered? How have I seen the fond mother, herself languishing, and fading away under some incurable malady, look upon her dear children for the last time, and then leave them to a heartless world! How have I seen the fair and beautiful babe turning cold upon the warm bosom of its nursing mother, and snatched away for the grave! In this house I have seen the young husband agonizing over his dying wife, the mother of his little children, feeling that nothing could save!

* See Appendix, No. 4.

In that house I have seen those affectionate souls, whom I had just united in the marriage bond, separated by the irresistible power, and disappointed of their fair expectations. In others what pestilent fevers, and broken bones, and gangrenes, and wasting fires, and long-continued sufferings, have I known! Indeed, what maladies, and operations and forms of distress are there, which I have not seen, even in this garden of life and health, too healthy to maintain a physician, where the annual average of deaths is under ten, and where, within a small fraction, one-fourth of the people have lived to seventy years. Some have gone up to ninety, and some to ninety-seven.

But the time would fail, unless I should go over the whole fifty years again. Should I give you the names of all the sufferers as I can now recollect them, and describe to you all their conditions, I should spread a cloud over this congregation, heavier than the night, and more dreadful than the storm! I suppose that from twelve to fifteen hundred bodies have been laid in this little plat of ground! Often have I brought to the sick bed that description of the good minister, (and wanted to have enough in me to make it my own,) so exquisitely done in the "Deserted Village."

“ Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns, dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control,
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul.
Comfort came down, the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.”

What worthy thanks can I repay to that divine hand which has holden me up through all the services and trials of these years! What becoming admiration can I feel, for so much acceptance among my brethren, and for so much strength and confidence, to stand before them to-day, after all these years of labor! My people have grown old with me. Behold this body of gray-headed men, here by my side, these that were fourteen, and sixteen, when they first came to my ministration. What a venerable sight in my eyes! The men must be sixty years old this day that can really know anything of my beginning here. The great body of this congregation can not look back to the time when I was not here. They have known no other minister. They must look upon me as a fixture; as if I had sprouted and grown upon this very spot.

I am exceedingly gratified in being enabled to testify to all these strangers here to-day, to the

regard, and kindness, and constancy of this people, in their deportment toward me, during the whole of these fifty years ! And never has their friendliness been more evident than now at the last. God has lately put me into a trying condition, as if for the very purpose of bringing out their tender feelings toward me. Just as we were calculating upon this great anniversary, and had in our anticipations made all things ready for it, and as we were also looking to another anniversary, the jubilee of our family, that golden day, imagining all our children and grandchildren gathered around us, suddenly my wife, Lucy Collins, left me for another world, on the sixteenth of November, just two months before the time of this celebration. O how unexpected ! How she slipped away insensibly to me, until the last moment ; insensibly to herself, I think, until she found herself in the presence of God ! no time to call a neighbor ! not a soul with me but one daughter, to catch the last breath, and close her fading eyes ! That was a scene to live before me all the rest of my days ! “ There was the weight that pulled me down ; all my earthly glories, in that one woman I have lost forever.” How much I depended on her for counsel, for prayer, for direc-

tion in my family, for encouragement in my ministry! I lived in her. My people honored me for her sake. They admired her wise influence in her family, her domestic industry and economy. How much my people delighted in her cheerful smile, in the prudence and discretion of her conversation, and in her active benevolence. "In her tongue was the law of kindness." She had her ministry of fifty years, together with me, not less important than my own, and without hers, I think mine had not been a quarter as long as the half-century. Indeed she had a matronly spirit at the beginning of our course, a commanding mind which caused her to be respected as the pastor's wife, even when she first came here with me, although she was only twenty-two years of age, at which period we are apt to look upon our daughters as mere children. They loved her visits. They rejoiced with her in the Bible class, and in the missionary association. Their esteem of her was unmeasured; and it is unspeakably gratifying to me to think and to speak of it. And now in my affliction at her departure, which cut all the cords of my family state, my people have gathered around me with every demonstration of pity and affection. Greatly have they shown themselves

ready to bless me by the bounties of their hand, for which I ask the love of God upon them and theirs.

Permit me to say a word as to the great object of my life. God touched my mind with a sense of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the sinner, when I was seventeen years old, and thus broke up all my youthful plans for the world. My first thoughts in my college course were upon the Christian ministry. My whole classical course was the study of divinity. My notes from President Dwight's preaching and lecturing formed a summary of doctrine, and of ministerial experience, of great service to me. My whole study of life has been directed to that one end. My half-century has been expended in preaching "Jesus Christ and him crucified." If I have labored in the garden, in the field, in the workshop, it has been to educate my children for the same work. If I have kept a school, it has been in subserviency to the ministry as the ruling object of my life. *One thing I do.* And now I lay down my active service in the ministry for the same end for which I took it up, *viz.*, the honor of Christ and his church. I rather sacrifice years of personal benefit, than HOLD ON till I become an odious thing, and constrain my

people to say, "Get thee hence." O let me never pull down with one hand what I have built up with the other. Any offense that I have caused in the feelings of any one of you, my people, and my children, during the whole course of my ministry, I do beg of you now, in the sight of my great Redeemer, to forgive me, that I may go clear, to the judgment of the great day.

I do now, in the presence of this assembly, (requiring of you, and enjoining it upon you, so far as I may, to settle a colleague, as soon as God will give you one,) I do now hereby resign, not my pastoral connection with the church, but my active services in the pastoral office, and cease from my special watch and care over you.

Now, my people, if you should rise up in a body here to-day, and propose this one question to me, *viz.*, "If we should all go back to our youth again, would you, with all your experience, come and be our minister again?" what would I say? If I were to go back and begin my life anew, I would choose the Christian ministry for my work, and for the joy of my life. Lord Jesus, accept me. "Would I come and be the minister of Newington, again?" Yes: yes: my brethren, I think I can say that I would, and spend the half-century with you.

Ministers of the Lord Jesus, a large company of you with me here to-day, I can not let the occasion pass without uttering my grateful word to you. I feel myself strengthened and comforted by looking on your friendly faces and receiving your love. A short time ago I was the youngest member of the association, and now I am the oldest. The most of this company of ministers, by whom I am surrounded this day, were born since the day of my ordination, and now they are advanced and experienced ministers of Christ! Indeed, I was not aware of my own age, until my brother Porter said to me at a council a few years ago, "You are the oldest acting pastor in the state, on the west side of the river," and I was struck with surprise by his declaration! Every one of my association is gone to the dead. With what reverence I look back upon those aged men of wisdom! I want to adopt the valedictory of Paul; if I might do it without arrogating to myself what does not belong to me: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love

his appearing." My younger brethren, "the love of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," that you may preach "Jesus Christ and him crucified;" that you may have the great Master always standing by you and saying to you, "He that heareth you heareth me;" that you may "turn many to righteousness, and shine as the stars forever and ever. Be not afraid, but speak and hold not your peace; for God has much people in your cities."

And here, brethren, let me remark, that the best rule of prudence, for a minister in his conduct toward his people, that I have ever found is, (1,) Never to be unthankful for a favor, however small, and (2,) Never to resent an injury, however great. May the Lord pour out his spirit upon your ministrations, and upon your people, and make "converts to be multiplied as the drops of the morning."

Ye deacons, and members of the church, with whom I have enjoyed so many heavenly hours at the communion table, the spirit of our blessed Master dwell in you. O ye that love the Lord Jesus Christ, if, notwithstanding my "weakness and fear, and much trembling," you shall be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, shining in all the beauty of holiness,

pressing on" from one degree of holiness to another, until you come into the presence of the great Redeemer; if I may "have you as my joy, and the crown of my rejoicing in the day of the Lord," then indeed "I shall not have labored in vain, neither run in vain," but shall possess "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory." O that I may have my place among you "in the presence of our Lord at his coming," when we shall "behold his face in righteousness, and be satisfied, having awaked in his likeness." I hope your souls have been made happy in the love of Christ by my ministrations, and that you will thus be the better prepared to enjoy his love forever. Let me exhort you, Christian brethren, to be more eminently holy in your spirit and conversation; for so you will honor Christ and promote his cause. Live above the world in faith and prayer; and so you will live for the salvation of others. Live a heavenly life; and so you will be qualified to help in the prayer meeting, and "ready to every good work." Be more engaged in the monthly concert of prayer for missions, and more active and liberal in your contributions, for giving the name of Christ to the whole world. Soon you too will be called to meet your master and judge. "Wherefore,

my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

I feel as if I were saying my last words, and therefore I wish to speak distinctly to every class of my people. My aged friends, associates, and companions of my toil, have we not loved one another all this long way? and shall we not mutually give the divine benediction? My friends and neighbors, who have grown up to mature age under my ministry, and have shown yourselves so respectful and kind to me, can I be indifferent to your happiness in Jesus the kind and everlasting friend? All the young people and children whom I have blessed from your birth, shall I not bless you still, and hope that you will live long and be happy, rejoicing in Jesus Christ as your great Redeemer? Is there any one of you, my young friends, but I have sought the redemption of your soul? "preaching Christ" unto every one of you, "warning every one" of you, "and teaching every one" of you, "that I might present every one" of you "perfect in Christ Jesus?"

There is another class of you upon whom I look with peculiar solicitude; you that have

attended on my ministry but have not been brought into the church by all that I could say to allure you to the Redeemer; you that have shown me favors all the way of my ministration and received me with the utmost confidence, and yet have held yourselves back from that one point to which I always longed to lead you; can I give you up as “having neither part nor lot” in the great salvation? Will you feel yourselves neglected in my invitations of the soul to come and receive “Jesus Christ and him crucified?” Will you believe that I am not anxious to have you “be saved from your sins,” and be “saved from the wrath to come?” Will you suppose that I have not prayed to the God of mercy for your everlasting blessedness? Am I to feel that you will still persevere under the power of worldliness, and finish your probation without doing anything more to prepare your soul for eternal life? Will you not, even you, now “know the things which belong to your peace;” and even now, after all your delay, still “come unto Jesus Christ and him crucified,” and be redeemed; “for is he not able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him?”

There is still one class more in this community, that I do not love to leave out, while I am speak-

ing my last words to the people among whom I have sojourned so long : I mean those that have not been accustomed to attend on my ministrations, and that have not been in the habit of visiting the house of public worship in other places. My neighbors and friends, I want you to feel, that I have a kind remembrance of you in these my closing services, and that I have as true a regard to the happiness of your souls as I have to the salvation of any other part of this population. I have it to say to you, that you have never manifested any feelings of unfriendliness toward me ; that you have always welcomed me to your houses, in the course of my pastoral visits, and at all other times ; that you have called upon me for religious services in your families as occasion required ; that you have ever been gratified with my attentions, and thankful to me whenever I have been with you in your rejoicings and in your afflictions ; that you have suffered me to speak to you with all freedom, of “the things which belong to your everlasting peace ;” and that you have taken my admonitions in good part. I may say that you have been continually the subject of my anxieties and of my prayers. And now I would ask, whether there are any souls among all the people

that I have regarded as more precious than yours? whether there are any to whom I have more willingly preached the gospel of the gracious Redeemer, as far as I had opportunity, than to you? and whether I do not now, in this winding up of my half-century, as cheerfully invite you too, to love “Jesus Christ and him crucified,” as I do any other, that so you may find acceptance with him in that great and last day. I wanted to have this paragraph in my historical discourse as much as any other, in order that I might testify my regard for you, in particular; because I feel unwilling to pass over any one, single human soul, in all this community to which I have ministered so long.

The duties of the pastor and minister must henceforth be performed by another; and be he a real “minister of Christ,” he shall be received by me with the utmost cordiality, and I will hope to enjoy as pleasant a colleagueship with him, whoever he may be, as I did with my aged father that went before. To him I shall commit you for instruction and counsel. You will no longer depend on me to guide your inquiring minds. In the sicknesses and mournings of your families, with which I have been connected so long, you will seek for the sympathy and comfort

of others. The last offices at your funerals will be performed by those that God shall send. The prayer meetings will be conducted by such as the Saviour shall appoint. The meetings at the different school-houses shall be addressed and animated by other voices. My young friends of the Bible class shall be gathered and guided by new teachers. The converts shall be introduced into the church and served at the communion table by other hands. The little ones shall be baptized and consecrated in the gracious covenant by the pastor whom Christ will give. The word shall be preached in this pulpit by the minister whom the master will ordain. The Spirit of God rest upon you in all.

But, unto the whole congregation I say—unto all the inhabitants within these parochial boundaries I would here say, although the time for relinquishing my active services is come, yet the time is not come for me to cease thinking of you, and loving you, and praying for you. In this solemn and impressive hour, “I bless you in the name of the Lord.” On this great anniversary which puts a period to my ministerial labors among you ; on this jubilee of my ministry when I can rejoice in the “goodness and mercy of God which have followed me all the days of my

life," while I have enjoyed with you "as the Israel of God, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night," I can cheerfully say, "The angel of God's presence go before you to lead you in the way," and conduct you safely to the promised land. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

And now what remains but that I bid you my Farewell? With patriarchal affection and hope let me say, I rejoice in all your advancement in knowledge, wisdom, and honor; in all your improvement in education, in the arts, and in the conveniences of life; in your acquaintance with the gospel of salvation; and I hope "the Lord will increase you yet more and more, a thousand fold, you and your children; that you may be a glory and a praise in the earth," and an everlasting joy in Jesus Christ the Redeemer. "May the God of love and peace be with you." May you soon have a pastor whom the Saviour will prepare and send to you; a pastor whom he will own and love, for your prosperity in every good thing here, and for your everlasting salvation. "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity

within thy palaces. For my brethren, and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good."

APPENDIX.

No. I.

CHARGE prepared by Rev. JOSHUA BELDEN, intended to be delivered at my ordination ; but prevented by his great age and infirmity. I have strong desire to append it here, from personal consideration, and from its being the only word of his ever printed.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: I bid you a hearty welcome, as a fellow-laborer, into this part of God's vineyard. I desire to give praise and glory to the God of all grace, the sovereign disposer of all events, that I am suffered to witness the solemn and joyful transactions of this day. It is with much satisfaction and supporting hope, now in my decline of life and strength, when unable to fulfill the duties of the ministry, that I may unite with my brethren of the council present, in committing to you, dear brother, the pastoral care of this flock of the Lord, which has long been my particular charge, for whom it has been, for many years, my earnest desire and daily prayer to God, that they might be saved. Accounting you faithful, I trust, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, you will acquit yourself so, in deed and in truth. And now, since it has pleased the great King and Head of the Church, who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holds the stars in his right hand, to lead his church and people in this place, very unanimously to invite you to undertake the work of the gospel ministry among them, and to be their spiritual guide and pastor, and has also inclined you to accept of their call, as the call of God to this sacred office, which you are judged, by the grace of God, qualified for ; we the ministers of Jesus Christ, convened in council upon this occasion, having received authority from him, to commit unto faithful men, that which he hath committed unto us, and having in his name, and with the concurrence of the messengers of the churches here present, by solemn prayer and imposing of

our hands, separated and set you apart to this sacred office, and thereby ordained you a minister of Jesus Christ in his visible kingdom, vested with full power and authority to preach the word of God, and dispense the ordinances of the gospel, wherever God in his providence shall call you to do it; and also to transmit the same office to others, where the way might be open for it, and more particularly having ordained you a pastor of the flock of Christ in this place, committing them to your pastoral care and oversight in the Lord, to feed them with the sincere milk of the word and ordinances, that they may grow thereby; and as we have thus committed the dispensation of the gospel to you, and the pastoral care of this flock of the Lord, we now exhort and charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and dead, at his appearing and kingdom, that you take heed to yourself, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you an overseer, that you faithfully fulfill the ministry which you have received in the Lord, and feed the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood. Let love to Christ, and to the souls of the people committed to your care, engage and animate you, to be diligent in feeding Christ's sheep, and in feeding his lambs by a steady and faithful discharge of the duties of your office. Herein study to show yourself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; and as your sufficiency for this arduous work is not of yourself, but must be of God, go to it in the strength of the Lord, and in a humble reliance on his grace, pray without ceasing, watching thereunto with all perseverance, give thyself unto prayer and to the ministry of the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine, give thyself to reading and meditation, that thy profiting may appear, in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that can not be condemned. Let Christ and him crucified, the fallen undone state of man, and the way of the sinner's recovery and salvation through a Redeemer, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, be the leading subjects of your preaching. Teach no other doctrine but what ministereth to godly edifying, not handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth as it is in Jesus, commend thyself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God; keep back nothing that may be profitable to the hearers, give to every one his portion in due season, hold fast the form of sound words delivered in the sacred oracles, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, take heed to thyself and to thy doctrine,

continue in them, that thou mayest both save thyself and them that hear thee. See also that thou faithfully dispense the Sacraments of the New Testament to proper subjects, as a wise and good steward in the house of God. And as you are intrusted with the keys of Christ's visible kingdom, we charge you, impartially to dispense the discipline Christ has instituted to be exercised in his church, making a difference between the holy and profane, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Let unfeigned love to Christ, zeal for his honor, and a compassionate concern for the salvation of immortal souls, be the governing principles of your whole conduct as a minister of Jesus. As becomes a man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. In all things show thyself a pattern of good works. Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. And if you faithfully keep this charge, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the word of faith and good doctrine, and when Christ, the chief Shepherd of the sheep, shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away. And may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory everlasting. Amen.

No. II.

NEWINGTON—ITS NAME AND ECCLESIASTICAL FUND.

The name of Newington was given to this place, as I have always understood, out of regard to the place of Dr. Watts's residence near London, and as a testimony of the love for the character and writings of that eminent minister and poet, which has ever been felt by the people of this place. True indeed, it is, that almost all the works of Dr. Watts are found in the public libraries of our people, are esteemed and loved as among the choicest books that have ever been published. I can have no doubt that the influence of Dr. Watts in his sermons, essays, catechisms and songs for children, lyric poems, psalms and hymns, has had a great and essential effect in forming the character and habits of our people, and I revolve it over and over in my mind as a delightful consideration. How many souls has he

trained for the songs and the blessedness of heaven! Every Sabbath day at least, the heavenly spirit of Watts is living in the hearts of our people. Their book of sacred music is made up of Watts's Psalms entire, Watts's three books of Hymns entire, together with a large selection of Hymns appended, taken from different authors.

Newington has for a long course of years enjoyed the benefit of an ecclesiastical fund, which has strengthened their bond of union, and which has relieved them of about half of the expense, in supporting the ministry. This fund has been derived from several sources, has been very carefully managed, and has come to be a great advantage to the society. When Rev. Elisha Williams was taken from this people to be the president of Yale College, the General Assembly of the state ordered the country taxes, as they were called, which were assessed upon the people of Newington, to be remitted to them for a number of years, in consideration of their sacrifice in yielding up their minister to the college. It appears, too, that the General Assembly required the college to repay money to Newington for the same reason. These moneys were put into the ecclesiastical fund. The people gathered those country taxes and appropriated the amount for this permanent benefit. There was also anciently a parsonage property, house and land belonging to the ecclesiastical society of Newington, which was sold by order of the society, and the avails of it were added to the ecclesiastical fund. That house was standing when I came into this place, and in it I have performed pastoral service. It belonged to the Robbins family, and stood on that rich swell of ground directly opposite the dwelling-house of Lowrey and Martin Robbins. It went by the name of the Backus house, because he was the only minister that ever dwelt in it. Mr. Williams built a house of his own, which is still standing, the property of Martin Kellogg, the building being now one hundred and thirty-five years old. Mr. Belden lived in his own house, but had the use of the parsonage land until by explicit agreement it was exchanged. Another source of addition to the fund is found in the alteration of town boundaries, between Farmington, Wethersfield and Berlin, a costly one indeed, because it took away people that had belonged to this congregation. A consideration of money was made for the cutting off of those families, and that money was put into the fund. Mr. Belden used to speak to me of the Kensington consideration, and of families in the north part of Worthington, that once belonged here. Some families in the Stanley quarter, Farmington, some in the Wells and Pratt street, New Britain, and some in Christian Lane,

toward Kensington, had been included among the members of this congregation. They were set off for their own accommodation, in their nearness to other parishes. Mr. Belden lamented those excisions because he wanted the people. I mention it as a matter of history in regard to the fund. There are other names which I ought to mention with honor, and I do, and with thanksgiving too. Rosanna and Sylvia Deming gave their property for the ecclesiastical benefit of this people. Amos Andrus left a handsome estate to this ecclesiastical society, and I speak of it here as giving a memorial of him. I believe this to be the whole account. I have received the product of that fund regularly every year of my ministry. And I have to say that the treasurer has always been very careful to get my receipt in full, before the current year came round, which punctuality and entireness of payment give great advantage to a small salary. I may well say that the financials of our society have been managed with great care and faithfulness.

May 3, 1764, Ebenezer Kilbourn and Bevil Seymour were appointed a committee to appear before the General Assembly, at Hartford, to remonstrate against the taking away of the inhabitants in Farmington that had been annexed to the society of Newington, which they considered a hardship; but if they must be taken away, to beg of the assembly an equivalence in favor of Newington.

Noah Stanley, Esq., states, "that his grandfather had three of his children baptized by Mr. Belding, at Newington—that about 1750, the people in Stanley quarter, (at least,) were obliged to pay to the ecclesiastical society in Newington, but not after 1754."

No. III.

ADDRESS of the Sabbath School, at the presentation of an Easy Chair to their Pastor, January 1, 1855.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: It is with mingled emotions of pleasure and sadness that we come upon this first day of the New Year, to tender you our affectionate greetings. We are in the morning of existence, our future is radiant with hope and joy, and we promise to ourselves many long years of happiness and usefulness. But we feel saddened at the recollection of that arrangement which in so short a time proposes to close the active services of our aged pastor, whom

we have so long and so tenderly regarded with love and veneration, from whose lips we have so often received the words of instruction and of kind admonition, and with whose name are intertwined so many hallowed associations. The high standard of virtue and morality which you have ever exemplified, and which you have ever impressed upon us by your advice, has inspired us with sincere respect for your character, and your kind forbearance and sympathizing familiarity have heightened that respect into abiding affection. Many who have in the past occupied our places, and who have gone forth into the busy scenes of active life enriched with your precepts, would to-day rejoice to mingle their best wishes with ours. And there are others too, whose familiar faces are vividly painted on our memories, but with whom the last farewells have long ago been spoken. We shall soon meet you in the Sabbath School and Bible Class *no more*; your exertions in the formation of our intellectual and moral characters will have ceased, but their impress and influence upon our future destinies will remain, and can be estimated by the mind of Omniscience alone. But before the bitter day* of separation arrives, when we must bid you farewell, we come to crave another blessing, still another benediction on our future efforts, and would fain leave some slight testimonial of our gratitude and regard, which may bear witness to you, and those who may come after you, that we fondly cherished and revered the memory of our aged pastor and friend to the last. We do therefore present you with this CHAIR,† not as a reward for the many favors received at your hands, for we know that nothing this side of eternity can so well reward you as our virtuous and useful lives; but we beg you to receive it as an expression of our determination to profit by your instructions, and as a memorial of our lasting affection, by which you may commune with us in the future. May it ever speak the warm emotion of our hearts and assure you of our never failing love. May it be to you in your declining years, a daily comfort and companion, and in weariness and pain, a faithful, soothing friend. And when at last the pulses of life shall have ceased, may this seat be exchanged for one in the mansions of the blessed above, at the right hand of him who sitteth upon the throne of God and the Lamb forever.

On the 31st of December, 1854, after I returned home from the Monthly Concert, I was informed that the whole Sabbath School

* 16th of January.

† A RICH, AND COSTLY, AND ELEGANT SEAT!

were to be at my house on the next day, to make me a New Year's visit, and to give me a word and a look of their kind regard. Accordingly they came in a company of about two hundred, and afforded me a most gratifying occasion. The foregoing is the address made, in their name, and delivered to me by their superintendent, Mr. Levi S. Deming, to which I replied, in amount, as follows:

TO ALL THIS COMPANY OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL: It gives me unspeakable pleasure, on this first day in the New Year, to receive you into my house, and especially as the whole Sabbath School, that I may look upon your pleasant faces, and may enjoy your kind feelings toward me, which give me a revival of my joy that I have always had with you, and which I now peculiarly feel, because I am just about to give up my labors among you. I bless you all in the name of the Lord, and hope that the love of the gracious Redeemer will ever rest upon you. This meeting of the young here to-day makes a kind impression never to be lost. I accept this beautiful and costly chair at your hands, with feelings of tenderness which I shall not be able to express to you; but I know you will readily accept my thanks. You have given it to me as an emblem of rest and of a quiet old age. It is about the first LUXURY that ever came into my house. I have had little to do with easy chairs in my whole life, because the goodness of God has granted me health and strength for continual exertion; but how much I may have to endure in this cushioned chair, who can tell? Superintendent and Teachers in the Sabbath School, the Lord grant unto you infinite love in your care of the young, and make every one of these a child of God. If my wife were alive here with us to-day, she would look upon you and wait upon you with unspeakable delight. I am happy to see you enjoy this elegant table of fruits and provisions, which is spread by the kindness of your families for the cheering of this meeting. I will commend you to God in prayer.

No. IV.

At a special meeting of the Ecclesiastical Society of Newington, held November 28th, 1854, it was voted that Charles K. Atwood, Roger Welles, Jr., and Levi S. Deming, be a committee to draft resolutions to respond to a communication from Rev. Joab Brace; who reported the following which were unanimously adopted.

Whereas, At a former meeting of the Newington Ecclesiastical Society, held November 14th, 1854, a communication was received from our pastor, Rev. Dr. BRACE, tendering, with the concurrence and approbation of the Society, the resignation of active pastoral labors, to take effect on and after January 16th, 1855, therefore

Resolved, That we accept of the proposals of said communication, and in so doing desire to express our full confidence in him, and our firm attachment to him, as a friend and minister of the Gospel to this people. And furthermore, of our sincere gratitude to him for a wise and judicious course during his fifty years of devoted labor as our pastor and spiritual adviser; and also for an ever ready manifestation of kindness and sympathy in the hour of trial and affliction, thus seeking by his counsel and example to promote our present and future welfare. The rewards of such faithful service can be but partially seen until the disclosures of that day which shall introduce to him the "seals of his ministry," his joy, and his crown.

Resolved, That this voluntary relinquishment of active labors as pastor, while in the possession of such intellectual and physical strength, exemplifies a peculiar characteristic of his ministry—the making of his own interest and happiness secondary to what he conceives to be conducive to the welfare of his people.

Resolved, That we shall ever cherish the memory of our present pastor with peculiar pleasure, and that it will be our happiness to receive, as in time past, his cheerful greeting and advice, pledging to him the continuance of our own best wishes for his future happiness and welfare.

Resolved, That we renew to our pastor and his family the expression of our heartfelt sympathy in the late affliction, which has taken from him the partner of his life and his joys, and also from this community the salutary influence, and the exemplary, consistent, Christian example of a firm and valued friend.

Resolved, That the foregoing resolutions be recorded and that Gen. Martin Kellogg, Dea. Jedediah Deming, and Dea. Jeremiah Seymour, be a committee to present an attested copy to our pastor, Rev. Dr. BRACE.

A true copy of the original resolutions.

Attest, EDWIN WELLES, CLERK.

JOSIAH ATWOOD, MODERATOR.

No. V.

SELECTIONS OF SCRIPTURE,

Read at the opening of the public service, January 16, 1855.

Moreover, Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. I. Cor. xv. 1, 2.

As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. I. Thess. ii. 12.

Wherefore, also, we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. II. Thess. i. 11, 12.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. I. Cor. i. 10.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. Phillip. i. 27.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. I. Cor. xv. 58.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work. II. Thess. ii. 16, 17.

No. VI.

“When quite young, my parents and other people told me, that the first settlers of Newington, in going to meeting at Wethersfield, in addition to the pulling off of their stockings and shoes to ford the streams, the women carried their infant children in their arms and the men carried their loaded guns for fear of the Indians.

DANIEL WILLARD.”

When I preached my first sermon at Ellington, for Rev. Diodate Brockway, he told of his fall in the steeple, from a height of sixty-five feet, to the ground. “I had just returned from Hartford, and having brought with me an important letter for my brother Hall, I lost no time in hastening over to the new meeting-house, where I found that Mr. Hall was on the roof observing the work of shingling. I immediately went up, and delivered the letter. Just as I was ready to come down, the master workman said to me, ‘We have been preparing some additional work above, and I want you to go up and see and judge of it.’ I observed that a very heavy man, of, I judge, twice my weight, had just come down. So up I went fifteen feet above the bell story; and no sooner had I grasped the highest cleat with both my hands, than off it came, and let me over backward! My fall was checked somewhat by that cleat, which I still held firm, and which caught upon the deck timbers as I went through. My weight twitched it out of my hands, and carried me down about half-way of the steeple, where I fell upon a two inch plank extending across the steeple, broke through that plank, and went down, with the pieces, upon a joiner’s bench which stood in the bottom, crushed it to the ground, and tore quite through the pine boards twenty-four heads of the nails which had been driven into the slit-work beneath!” He was alive though dreadfully broken; and he went on with the ministry about forty years! It was a marvelous preservation!

There are three occasions connected with my anniversary, which give much pleasure to my recollections. (1.) The meeting of the Sabbath School at my house on the first day of January, 1855. (2.) The gathering of the ministers and their families at my house immediately after the public service on the 16th, where my brethren gave me a look and a word of congratulation, and where they enjoyed the entertainment kindly provided by my people. They left their choicest benedictions for my people and me. (3.) The coming of my people to my house on the evening of January 17th. On the

Sabbath, I had given my invitation to every human soul within the whole precincts, to call upon me at that time. That meeting also was amply furnished by the generosity of the people; and I desired my two sons, Rev. S. N. Shepard, of Madison, and Rev. J. Todd, of Pittsfield, to speak unto the assembly, and pray with them, and bless them in the name of the Lord, which they did to my great satisfaction; and I think I may say, that I never enjoyed, in the whole fifty years, a more agreeable interview with my people than the last.

No. VII.

PROCEEDINGS AT THE HOUSE OF THE PASTOR.

After the public exercises, the clergymen present, of different denominations repaired, by invitation, to the Pastor's house, and enjoyed a bountiful refreshment provided for them by the people. Rev. Dr. CLARKE, of Hartford, then called to order, and after a few appropriate remarks on the occasion, invited Rev. Dr. TUCKER, of Wethersfield, to address the company. Dr. T. spoke of the ties which bound this church to that under his own charge, from which this was colonized. He described the attachment which had been formed between the pastor at Newington, and himself, from meeting frequently for Christian communion and counsel. He closed with ardent wishes for the happiness of the retiring pastor, in what remains of life's journey.

Judge WELLES, of Wethersfield, was next called. He had been present at the ordination of Dr. Brace, and a member of the choir on that occasion. He contrasted the present condition of the parish with that fifty years since; and pronounced the present prosperity the best comment on the influence of the ministry whose closing services they had attended with so much interest. He regarded the outflowing of Christian affection which was manifest among the people, as the best tribute to the fidelity of the pastor. No other commendation was needed, and his own heart was too full for words, on an occasion like this.

Rev. Dr. HAWES being next called upon, referred to the emotions he had felt in seeing an Indiaman—a gallant ship full freighted, and full rigged, outriding storms, and notwithstanding the tempests, coming safely into port, and casting her rich treasures into the lap of the owners. He had to-day witnessed a scene of deeper interest,—an

aged standard-bearer, having borne the storms of a long life voyage, and faithfully served his master, comes to pour into the bosom of his confiding church, and the circle of his brethren, the treasures of a long and rich experience. It was a fitting close of a favored ministry. This termination of the pastoral office, and laying down the commission borne for more than half a century, while yet conscious of the possession of vigorous powers, and of the active confidence and affection of a grateful people, was a delightful exhibition of the power of the gospel. He spoke of the strong affection which years of intercourse and mutual counsel had ripened, and of the fruits matured under the ministry now terminated. He could only congratulate the aged brother that he was nearing the port where all the garnered treasures of a faithful ministry were to be poured at the feet of his Divine Master, and where the sweet rest and peace would be eternal.

Dr. Clarke then called on Rev. Dr. MURDOCK, of the South Baptist Church in Hartford. Dr. M. said that although he had not come like those who followed our Saviour, because they "did eat of the loaves and were filled," he had enjoyed a feast—intellectual, spiritual, and physical. He was literally filled; but he had come also to witness the miracles. He was sorry to feel that the age of such miracles was coming to an end. He had witnessed the miracle, in these days of change, of a pastor, for fifty years occupying the same pulpit, and at the close of this long period, holding the affections of his people with a stronger grasp than ever. He had seen the miracle of the pastor held in such affection and confidence, laying aside his commission and surrendering his charge, and from the same high motive that led him to gird on the armor fifty years ago. Although of another denomination, he had loved Father Brace from his first acquaintance. Precious fruits of his ministry—those who had been trained under it, had become useful members of his own church; and these he found to entertain such a regard for the pastor whom they learned to honor in childhood, as he himself could hardly hope to win from them. He had often met Dr. Brace in the ministers' prayer-meeting in Hartford. He cherished the memory of that intercourse; and loved to think that it would be renewed beyond the wastes of time.

Rev. Mr. FISHER, of the Free Episcopal Church in Hartford, was next called out by Dr. Clarke, in some playful allusions to the days of boyhood. Mr. Fisher spoke with much feeling of his relation to Dr. Brace, when the teacher of the academy, alluded to in the sermon. He had ever felt a deep interest in the ministry and the church of the father who had now retired, surrounded by strong affec-

tions matured by a long and useful ministry. The scene witnessed three years ago, when the pastor proposed to lay down his commission, was one long to be remembered. It was difficult to say which was most to be admired, the tendering of his resignation while hale and vigorous, lest possibly he might outrun his usefulness, or the unanimous wish of his people that he should serve them still, and delay his resignation to a distant day.

Rev. Mr. ROCKWOOD, of Rocky Hill, was called upon as one of the young men in the ministry. He said that when he came to Connecticut three years ago, Father Brace took him by the hand and welcomed him to the state. That first greeting, full of encouragement, was the introduction to an acquaintance which had been increasingly pleasant to this day. He spoke of the recent bereavement of Dr. Brace, as the loosing of another earthly tie, and as suited to increase the attractions of heaven. He felt assured that the colleague who might be called to settle here, would find the relation as pleasant as was his with Dr. Chapin. He concluded with the desire that the younger ministers might enjoy the prayers and the counsels of the aged fathers in the ministry; since they had come with the inexperience of youth into the pastoral work in perilous times.

Dr. Clarke called on Rev. Mr. MERWIN, of New Haven, to point out the hidden spring of the fountain which had for half a century watered this heritage. Mr. M. remarked that he had been acquainted with the retiring pastor longer than any one of those who had spoken. He should reach the half-century of his own ministry in a few weeks. He remembered the revival in Yale College in which his brother Brace was so deeply interested. He had watched the progress of his friend, and admired the fruits ripened in his Christian course. He commended the discretion shown by his brother, in the resignation of active service while in full possession of his powers, and of the affections of his people. Three years before he had proposed to resign; but when the people answered No, he had labored on to this time—the close of the half-century. Mr. M. had been impressed with the declaration of the pastor, that if called to live his life over again, he would choose the ministry as his profession, in full view of all its trials and difficulties. It reminded him of the military commander who said, at the festival which celebrated his signal victory—“Gentlemen, I feel that I could fight the battle over again.”

This interview at the house of the Pastor, formed an admirable close of the exercises, and will be remembered with satisfaction.



